MUNICH CONFERENCE ON SECURITY POLICY
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2008, 9:00 A.M.

Thank you for that introduction. I would also like to thank the people of Munich for once again allowing us to gather in this beautiful city.

I am glad to see many of my colleagues here, as well as many of the delegations that were with us in Vilnius for the NATO ministerial. As I said in Vilnius – three weeks ago I accomplished a key goal I have been pursuing for the last year: through the good offices of the *Los Angeles Times*, I finally brought unity to NATO – though perhaps not as I had wished.

It is an honor to be invited to speak here for a second, and last, year as U.S. Secretary of Defense.

Vilnius was my fourth NATO ministerial since taking this post, but my first in a nation that had been part of the former Soviet Union. Lithuania was one of the first nations to be swallowed by the Soviets, and the first republic to declare its independence as Baltic push came to Soviet shove. It is now a proud member of NATO, and the leader of a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan.

For the transatlantic alliance, the period in which Lithuania and other captive nations gained their independence was a time of reflection. Not only were we pondering enlargement to secure the wave of democracy sweeping across Eastern Europe, but NATO was also pondering the very concept of collective self-defense in a post- Cold War world.

We saw this in 1991, when NATO issued its first Strategic Concept. This document recognized that [QUOTE] a "single massive and global threat ha[d] given way to diverse and multi-directional risks" [UNQUOTE] – challenges such as weapons proliferation; disruption of the flow of vital resources; ethnic conflict; and terrorism. Overcoming these threats, the document stated, would require a "broad approach to security," with political, economic, and social elements.

From the perspective of one who played a role in that effort to redirect NATO 17 years ago, today I would like to discuss a subject that embodies the security challenges that have emerged since that time, and correspondingly, the capabilities we need, in this new era.

That subject is, not surprisingly, Afghanistan. After six years of war, at a time when some may sense frustration, impatience, or even exhaustion with this mission, I believe it is valuable to step back and take stock of Afghanistan:

- First, within the context of the long-standing purpose of the Alliance, and how it relates to the threats of a post Cold War world;

- Second, with regard to NATO's vision of becoming a transformed, multifaceted, expeditionary force – and how we have evolved in accordance with that vision; and
- Finally, to recapitulate to the people of Europe the importance of the Afghanistan mission and its relationship to the wider terrorist threat.

There is little doubt that the mission in Afghanistan is unprecedented. It is, in fact, NATO's first ground war and it is dramatically different than anything NATO has done before. However, on a conceptual level, I believe it falls squarely within the traditional bounds of the Alliance's core purpose: to defend the security interests and values of the transatlantic community.

During the 1990s, even as we tried to predict what form the threats of the 21st century would take, Afghanistan was, <u>in reality</u> becoming exactly what we were discussing <u>in theory</u>. Subsequent events during the intervening years have shown that:

- Instability and conflict abroad have the potential to spread and strike directly at the hearts of our nations;
- New technology and communications connect criminal and terrorist networks far and wide, and allow local problems to become regional and even global;
- Economic, social, and humanitarian problems caused by massive immigration flows radiate outward with little regard for national borders;
- A nexus between narcotics and terrorists increases the resources available to extremists in the region, while increasing the drug flow to European streets; and
- The presence of safe havens, combined with a lack of development and governance, allow Islamic extremists to turn a poisonous ideology into a global movement.

More than five years ago in Prague, in the wake of the September 11th attacks, our nations set out to transform NATO into an expeditionary force capable of dealing with the threats of this type – capable of helping other nations help themselves to avoid Afghanistan's fate. At the time, I imagine many were unsure of what, exactly, this would look like – what new structures, training, funding, mindsets, and manpower would be needed. Since then, however, we have applied our vision on the ground in Afghanistan.

Today:

- Nearly 50,000 troops from some 40 allies and partner nations serve under NATO command, thousands of miles from the Alliance's traditional borders;
- Growing numbers of reconstruction and security training teams are making a real difference in the lives of the Afghan people; and
- NATO's offensive and counterinsurgency operations in the South have dislodged the Taliban from their strongholds and reduced their ability to launch large scale or coordinated attacks.

Due to NATO's efforts, as Minister Jung pointed out yesterday, Afghanistan has made substantial progress in health care, education, and the economy – bettering the lives of millions of its citizens.

Through the Afghan mission, we have developed a much more sophisticated understanding of what capabilities we need as an Alliance and what shortcomings must be addressed.

Since the Riga summit, there has been much focus on whether all allies are meeting their commitments and carrying their share of the burden. I have had a few things to say about that myself. In truth, virtually all allies are fulfilling the individual commitments they have made. The problem is that the Alliance as a whole has not fulfilled its broader commitment from Riga to meet the force requirements of the commander in the field.

As we think about how to satisfy those requirements, we should look more creatively at other ways to ensure that all allies can contribute more to this mission – and share the burden. But we must not – we cannot – become a two-tiered Alliance of those willing to fight and those who are not. Such a development, with all its implications for collective security, would effectively destroy the Alliance.

As many of you know, a Strategic Vision document is being drafted that will assess NATO's and our partners' achievements in Afghanistan, and will produce a set of realistic goals and a roadmap to meet them over the next three to five years. We continue urgently to need a senior civilian – a European in my view – to coordinate all non-military international assistance to the Afghan government and people. The lack of such coordination is seriously hampering our efforts to help the Afghans build a free and secure country.

The really hard question the Alliance faces is whether the whole of our effort is adding up to less than the sum of its parts, and, if that is the case, what we should do to reverse the equation.

As an Alliance, we must be willing to discard some of the bureaucratic hurdles that have accumulated over the years and hinder our progress in Afghanistan. This means more willingness to think and act differently – and quickly. To pass initiatives such as the NATO Commander's Emergency Response Fund. This tool has proven itself elsewhere, but will, for NATO, require a more flexible approach to budgeting and funding.

Additionally, it is clear that we need a common set of training standards for every one going to Afghanistan – whether they are combat troops conducting counterinsurgency operations; civilians working in Provincial Reconstruction Teams; or members of operational mentoring and liaison training teams. Unless we are all on the same page – unless our efforts are tied together and unified by similar tactics, training, and goals – then the whole of our efforts will indeed be less than the sum of the parts.

I also worry that there is a developing theology about a clear-cut division of labor between civilian and military matters – one that sometimes plays out in debates over the respective roles of the European Union and NATO, and even among the NATO allies. In

many respects, this conversation echoes one that has taken place – and still is – in the United States within the civilian and military agencies of the U.S. government as a result of the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns.

For the United States, the lessons we have learned these past six years – and in many cases re-learned – have not been easy ones. We have stumbled along the way, and we are still learning. Now, in Iraq, we are applying a comprehensive strategy that emphasizes the security of the local population – those who will ultimately take control of their own security – and brings to bear in the same place and often at the same time civilian resources for economic and political development.

We have learned that war in the 21st century does not have stark divisions between civilian and military components. It is a continuous scale that slides from combat operations to economic development, governance and reconstruction – frequently all at the same time.

The Alliance must put aside any theology that attempts clearly to divide civilian and military operations. It is unrealistic. We must live in the real world. As we noted as far back as 1991, in the real world, security has economic, political, and social dimensions. And vice versa. In the future, the E.U. and NATO will have to find ways to work together better, to share certain roles – neither excluding NATO from civilian-military operations nor barring the E.U. from purely military missions. In short, I agree entirely with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer and Minister Morin's comments yesterday that there must be a "complimentarity" between the E.U. and NATO.

At the same time, in NATO, some allies ought not to have the luxury of opting only for stability and civilian operations, thus forcing other Allies to bear a disproportionate share of the fighting and the dying.

Overall, the last few years have seen a dramatic evolution in NATO's thinking and in its posture. With all the new capabilities we have forged in the heat of battle – and with new attitudes – we are seeing what it means to be expeditionary. What is required to spread stability beyond our borders. We must now commit ourselves to institutionalize what we have learned and to complete our transformation.

Just as we must be realistic about the nature and complexity of the struggle in Afghanistan, so too must we be realistic about politics in our various countries. NATO, after all, is an alliance whose constituent governments all answer to their citizens.

My colleagues in Vilnius and those in this room certainly understand the serious threat we face in Afghanistan. But I am concerned that many people on this continent may not comprehend the magnitude of the direct threat to European security. For the United States, September 11th was a galvanizing event – one that opened the American public's eyes to dangers from distant lands. It was especially poignant since our government had been heavily involved in Afghanistan in the 1980s, only to make the

grievous error – for which I was at least partly responsible – of abandoning a destitute and war-torn nation after the last Soviet soldier crossed the Termez bridge.

While nearly all the Alliance governments appreciate the importance of the Afghanistan mission, European public support for it is weak. Many Europeans question the relevance of our actions and doubt whether the mission is worth the lives of their sons and daughters. As a result, many want to remove their troops. The reality of fragile coalition governments makes it difficult to take risks. And communicating the seriousness of the threat posed by Islamic extremism in Afghanistan, the Middle East, Europe, and globally remains a steep challenge.

As opinion leaders and government officials, we are the ones who must make the case publicly and persistently.

So now I would like to add my voice to those of many allied leaders on the continent and speak directly to the people of Europe: The threat posed by violent Islamic extremism is real – and it is not going away to go away. You know all too well about the attacks in Madrid and London. But there have also been multiple smaller attacks in Istanbul, Amsterdam, Paris, and Glasgow, among others. Numerous cells and plots have been disrupted in recent years as well – many of them seeking large-scale death and destruction, such as:

- A complex plot to down multiple airliners over the Atlantic that could have killed hundreds or even thousands;
- A plot to use ricin and release cyanide in the London Underground;
- A separate plan for a chemical attack in the Paris metro;
- Plots in Belgium, England, and Germany involving car bombs that could have killed hundreds;
- Homemade bombs targeting commuter and high-speed trains in Spain and Germany;
- Individuals arrested in Bosnia with explosives, a suicide belt, and an instructional propaganda video;
- Two plots in Denmark involving explosives, fertilizer, and a bomb-making video; and
- Just in the last few weeks, Spanish authorities arrested 14 Islamic extremists in Barcelona suspected of planning suicide attacks against public transportation systems in Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, and Britain.

Imagine, for a moment, if some or all of these attacks had come to pass. Imagine if Islamic terrorists had managed to strike <u>your</u> capitals on the same scale as they struck in New York. Imagine if they had laid their hands on weapons and materials with even greater destructive capability – weapons of the sort all too easily accessible in the world today. We forget at our peril that the ambition of Islamic extremists is limited only by opportunity.

We should also remember that terrorist cells in Europe are not purely homegrown or unconnected to events far away – or simply a matter of domestic law and order. Some

are funded from abroad. Some hate all western democracies, not just the United States. Many who have been arrested have had direct connections to Al Qaeda. Some have met with top leaders or attended training camps abroad. Some are connected to Al Qaeda in Iraq. In the most recent case, the Barcelona cell appears to have ties to a terrorist training network run by Baitullah Mehsud, a Pakistan-based extremist commander affiliated with the Taliban and Al Qaeda – who we believe was responsible for the assassination of Benazir Bhutto.

What unites them is that they are all followers of the same movement – a movement that is no longer tethered to any strict hierarchy but one that has become an independent force of its own. Capable of animating a corps of devoted followers without direct contact. And capable of inspiring violence without direct orders.

It is an ideological movement that has, over the years, been methodically built on the illusion of success. After all, about the only thing they have accomplished recently is the death of thousands of innocent Muslims while trying to create discord across the Middle East. So far they have failed. But they have twisted this reality into an aura of success in many parts of the world. It raises the question: What would happen if the false success they proclaim became real success? If they triumphed in Iraq or Afghanistan, or managed to topple the government of Pakistan? Or a major Middle Eastern government?

Aside from the chaos that would instantly be sown in the region, success there would beget success on many other fronts as the cancer metastasized further and more rapidly than it already has. Many more followers could join their ranks, both in the region and in susceptible populations across the globe. With safe havens in the Middle East, and new tactics honed on the battlefield and transmitted via the Internet, violence and terrorism worldwide could surge.

I am not indulging in scare tactics. Nor am I exaggerating either the threat or inflating the consequences of a victory for extremists. Nor am I saying that the extremists are ten feet tall. The task before us is to fracture and destroy this movement in its infancy – to permanently reduce its ability to strike globally and catastrophically, while deflating its ideology. Our best opportunity as an alliance to do this is in Afghanistan. Just as the hollowness of Communism was laid bare with the collapse of the Soviet Union, so too would success in Afghanistan, as well as in Iraq, strike a decisive blow against what some commentators have called Al Qaeda-ism.

This is a steep challenge. But the events of the past year have proven one thing above all else: If we are willing to stand together, we can prevail. It will not be quick, and it will not be easy – but it can be done.

In the years ahead, the credibility of NATO, and indeed the viability of the Euro-Atlantic security project itself, will depend on how we perform now. Other actors in the global arena – Hezbollah, Iran and others – are watching what we say and what we do, and making choices about their own future course.

Everyone knows that in 2009 the United States will have a new administration. And this time, next year, you will be hearing from a new Secretary of Defense.

But regardless of which party is in power, regardless of who stands at this podium, the threats we face now and in the future are real. They will not go away. Overcoming them will require unity between opposition parties and across various governments, and uncommon purpose within the Alliance and with other friends and partners.

I began my remarks with a bit of history about NATO in the 1990s. I would like to close with a few words about the dawn of the transatlantic Alliance.

From our present-day vantage point, victory in the Cold War now seems almost preordained. But as we prepare to celebrate NATO's 60th anniversary next year, it is useful to recall that 60 years ago this year, in 1948, the year of the Berlin airlift, few people would have been all that optimistic about the future of Europe, or the prospect of a Western alliance. The Continent was devastated, its economy in shambles. The United States was debating the European recovery program – known as the Marshall Plan – and faced a resurgent isolationism. Europe was under siege – with pressure from communism being felt in Germany, France, Finland, Norway, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Greece.

In January of that year, Ernest Bevin, the British foreign secretary, went before parliament to discuss the Soviet Union and other threats to the United Kingdom. Between all the "kindred souls of the West," he said, "there should be an effective understanding bound together by common ideals for which the Western Powers have twice in one generation shed their blood."

Less than two months later, President Harry Truman stood in the United States Congress and echoed that sentiment. He said: "The time has come when the free men and women of the world must face the threat to their liberty squarely and courageously . . . Unity of purpose, unity of effort, and unity of spirit are essential to accomplish the task before us."

That unity held for decades through ups and downs. It held despite divisions and discord, stresses and strains, and through several crises where another war in Europe loomed. Alexis de Tocqueville once warned that democracies, when it came to foreign affairs, were ill-suited to pursue a "great undertaking" and "follow it [through] with determination." But the democracies of the West did just that – for more than 40 years. And they can do so once more today.

We must find the resolve to confront together a new set of challenges. So that, many years from now, our children and their children will look back on this period as a time when we recommitted ourselves to the common ideals that bind us together. A time when we again faced a threat to peace and to our liberty squarely and courageously. A time when we again shed blood and helped war devastated people nourish the seeds of

freedom and foster peaceful, productive societies. That mission drew us together in 1948 and keeps us together today.

Many years from now, perhaps future generations will look back on this period and say, "victory seemed almost preordained."

Thank you.

Q&A:

Horst Teltschik: Thank you Secretary Gates for this very important speech for this conference. Ladies and gentlemen, we have a hell of a lot of participants who want to intervene – now 16 people. We have half an hour. I might use the traffic light system – that means green, you are allowed to speak; yellow, come to an end; and red, please stop it. And I give you two minutes each. The first one is Mr. Ostrovsky, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Duma.

Mr. Ostrovsky, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Duma: Distinguished Mr. Secretary, thank you for a very comprehensive report that the audience has just heard. Unfortunately I couldn't hear two assessments and my question will be double fault. First, at present the entire world faces the threat of terrorism which emanates primarily from Al Qaeda, the terrorist organization. Don't you think that in the first place this organization for its appearance and the serious threat of terrorism we witness today, it is the fault of the leadership of your country and of your security services in the 1970s and the 80s of the last century, when for American money, with the active political support the Afghan mujahedin were fighting the Soviet troops who tried to support peace and order in that country. And after that when the Soviet troops left, for all intents and purposes, people who have been created by you were idle. This is the first part of my question.

The second part is the threat that the countries of central Asia experienced, the countries of eastern and western Europe, Russia, the threat of drug trafficking, the constant increase in drug trafficking, and primarily in our country because the United States does not touch upon this question because these territories are far distant. Don't you think that the leadership of your country, when it changed the regime in Afghanistan, they forgot to ensure something – the continuity of what existed under the Taliban, whether they were bad or good, but under them the production of opium and heroin was completely stopped. Now the new government is incapable of coping with that problem and the amount of drugs reaching Russia, the central Asian republics, and Europe is growing with every day. Thank you.

Mr. Westerwelle, head of the Free Democratic Party in the German Parliament: Minister, first of all, thank you very much for your comments. And indeed, Secretary, I think that it's important to understand and to stress that the success of our operations in Afghanistan is linked to our own European security. This is something that we see eye-to-eye on in Germany and Europe -- the majority of us. But concerning our contribution

to Afghanistan, I would just like to make a comment. Before this conference we had a discussion on this subject among the partners and this was in fact reflected in the media. Now when we consider our contribution in the north of Afghanistan, we don't see the point in reducing this to assume responsibility elsewhere. The operations of the Germans in the north are not something that lacks danger. We have tragically lost a lot of service men and women there already. It is an operation, which is successful because we have always said that we want to have this military assistance for civilian reconstruction there. Therefore we think that it would be wiser to continue what we have been doing so far in the north successfully. I have made this comment just to point out this is not just the opinion of the federal government, as heard from the Defense Minister yesterday. But this is the opinion of the large majority of the German parliament, the Bundestag, and since you referred to this question, Secretary, I would just like to refer to this as well. There is this discussion among the leading parties in Germany and this is an opinion, which the government has and which is supported by the majority of the population and the parties.

Mr. Rassoul, Senior Advisor to Mr. Karzai: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, I would like here first to thank the United States for liberating Afghanistan and contributing generously to its reconstruction and development. I would also like to say that the Afghan people are deeply grateful for the sacrifices and assistance that all nations, present in this hall and outside of this hall, for defending Afghanistan and its democratic institutions. I would like to say also that Afghanistan should be seen also within its regional context. The issue of [inaudible], financing, training of terrorists should be considered. And also much more focus should be given to the training and equipping of the Afghanistan National Army and Afghan National Police, which is going to be the way for the future. Of course, economic development and education are also important factors to defeat terrorism and extremism. And finally, Mr. Secretary, Afghanistan is in the front line of the war on terrorism. The Afghan people -- with your help -- is fully determined to succeed against our common threat, which is terrorism and extremism. Thank you.

Senator Lieberman: Thank you, Horst, and thank you Bob Gates for a very insightful, eloquent and important statement. I want to say to my fellow delegates here at the Munich conference that what Bob Gates has said this morning is not just the position of Secretary Gates. It is not just the opinion of the Bush Administration on Afghanistan. It is the American position on Afghanistan. This is one of those unusual cases in the United States today where there really is bipartisan agreement on a matter of foreign policy. Not just Senator McCain, but Senator Clinton and Senator Obama, have very similar positions on the question of Afghanistan. The Secretary of Defense who appears at this conference next year, I predict, will say exactly what Secretary Gates has said this year; and in some senses, if I may say to our European allies in NATO, that Secretary will say it free of the unpopularity of President Bush here in Europe. But the substance of it will be exactly the same.

Secondly, we have learned some lessons in Iraq. They have been painful. One is that numbers matter, that the number if troops we added as part of the surge had an effect

in putting Al Qaeda and the extremists on the run. But the other thing we learned is that military victory is not enough in these conflicts. You need also to train, to make economic investments that lead to development, self-governance, and self-defense. So these are the discussions we are having about what we hope our allies in NATO will do more of in Afghanistan to ensure success.

We appreciate very much what you have done. And as Bob Gates said, very importantly we understand that making war is difficult in a democracy – and it should be; and that the contributions that our European allies have made have been substantial and admirable because in many cases the leaders are taking action that is not supported by the public here in Europe. We appreciate that deeply and I thank Bob particularly for going beneath the discussions we are having about more troops, caveats, who does what, to the underlying question of how we can help you help the publics here in Europe make the connection between what I might say is the [inaudible] of the Homeland Security committee in the United States Senate. Dealing with my colleagues in European parliaments and understanding the genuine and deep concern that the people of Europe have about domestic violent Islamic extremism and terrorism, it is important to make the link between that and what we are doing in Afghanistan. This is a global war we are in. It looks like no other war we have ever fought, but it is global. It has an ideology. It has a goal. And to state it as simply as we can, if we allow Afghanistan to become again a failed state, we will not only have abandoned the people of Afghanistan to the terrible lives that they had under the Taliban, but we will have created a failed state from which violent action will be taken against people in Munich and London and Paris and all the other cities of Europe. That's the connection that we need to help you make. This war is not popular in America, no more than the war in Iraq is, but it is the judgment of the leaders of both parties, and I think the American people, that it is a necessary war because, as Afghanistan goes, so too will go our own security and yours.

I would say very briefly that in all the discussions and debates we have today about accession to NATO and the different points of disagreement between the U.S. and Russia, these all pale in comparison to the transcendent challenge of our time, which is violent Islamic extremism and terrorism. On this, we are all on the same side because this movement threatens the fundamental values of all of our societies, which value individual life and freedom. The enemy that we face obviously has a very, very different worldview. A week or 10 days ago, the terrorist in Baghdad sent two mentally disabled women into markets, strapped with explosives, and blew them up by remote. Now I think we have to think about what kind of evil that represents, and understand that if we abandon or fail in Afghanistan, that evil will not only be in Kabul, it will be in Washington and all the other capitals of Europe. Thank you, Bob, for a great statement.

Secretary Gates: Well, with respect to the first question and the responsibility of the United States for a revived variety of ills, it reminded me of my old days in the CIA when people thought that not a leaf fell around the world without CIA knowing about it or being responsible for it. With respect to the threat from Al Qaeda and the notion that it is the fault of the U.S., I think we have a bit of a chicken and egg problem here. My own view is the threat from Al Qaeda began with the Soviet invasion of a sovereign state in

December 1979, a state that up to that point had not represented a threat to anybody in the world, except to a certain extent its own people because of its weakness and poverty. It was the Soviet invasion that in fact created the holy warriors, the mujahedin, determined to take on the Soviet military. The United States does not shrink from responsibility for providing them with the tools and the weapons and whatever they needed in order to expel a foreign invader. That same kind of religious fervor that helped create the mujahedin and helped expel the Soviet Union in subsequent years was distorted and certain extremists among the mujahedin became stronger, and we have the problem we have. So I would say if the United States, if we bear a particular responsibility for the role of the mujahedin and Al Qaeda growing up in Afghanistan, it had more to do with our abandonment with the country in 1989 rather than our assistance to it in 1979. And I think that most Americans think that we erred in turning our backs on Afghanistan after the Soviets left.

With respect to the drug trafficking problem, there is no question but that the Taliban were very effective in cutting down on the trade, the means seem to be, to me, means that no one in this room and no one in the Alliance of nations working to help Afghanistan would tolerate. If you just go out and kill all the peasants, kill all the women, kill anybody in the fields, that's a pretty effective, that's not just crop eradication, that's farmer eradication. I think that's a little draconian. There is no question that the growth of narcotics production in Afghanistan is a problem that should concern us all, and frankly one of the deficiencies in our strategy, whether it's EU or NATO in Afghanistan right now, is the absence of a comprehensive counter-narcotics strategy to begin dealing with this problem and providing alternative means of living. My hope is that if we get this senior coordinator that we have been talking about, that that can be one of the action items.

Second question had to do with whether the Germans should change their mission in the north, my answer to that would be no. The Germans are doing a terrific job in the north. Their contribution is immensely important. They have one of the largest contingents in Afghanistan and so I think the people ought to continue doing what they do best. We are all grateful for the contribution that Germany is making. To go back to my remarks, what I am really suggesting is that none of us have an individual responsibility to do more, but collectively as an Alliance, we have a commitment made at Riga to do more to meet the needs of the Commander in the field, the requirements of the Commander. I am simply reaching out to all of the defense ministers in NATO, saying the United States has dug deep, found 3,200 Marines we can send for seven months, can you please do the same? Can you please look, dig deep, and see if there is a greater contribution that you can make. It's ultimately a decision that each country will need to make.

The third question, the problem of sanctuaries is very clearly a problem. Although there have been significantly fewer Taliban and Al Qaeda coming across the border in Regional Command East in recent months, it is still clearly a problem in Regional Command South, it is a problem that we will need to continue to work on. Clearly, training and equipment for the Afghan National Police and the Afghan National

Army must be the centerpiece of our effort for a long-term solution in Afghanistan. It must be eventually the Afghans' responsibility to protect their towns and to protect their country. We need to give as much emphasis as possible to training and equipment measures.

Finally, just one point from Senator Lieberman's comments, that numbers matter. I was asked last night by a journalist about the ratio that we have been talking about, the ratio of troops needed to successfully fight an insurgency like the Taliban are fighting. If you did the ratios according to the textbooks that it would require something like 400,000 troops. My response was, first of all that the fellow who wrote the textbook is David Petraeus and he has shown over the past year that you don't need to go to that kind of a ratio if you have the right strategy and you have the right political strategy in beginning to turn people who are reconcilable and who don't want to see these Taliban killers in their towns. So I think additional force clearly is required. A huge additional force, I think, our experience in Iraq would suggest is not necessary.

One final point, and to the Senator's point about military success is not sufficient. This is one place where I think all of the allied governments that are involved in Afghanistan are in total agreement. There is a requirement for a comprehensive strategy in Afghanistan that combines the security part of it but also the civil construction and economic development.

Teltschik: Thank you, Bob. We have a second round of questions.

Mr. Jandrokovic, Foreign Minister of Croatia: I would like to thank Defense Secretary Gates for an overview of the challenges we all face in Afghanistan. From the perspective of my country which is very much engaged in the operation, presently with 200 soldiers operating with no caveats and while increasing our contingent to 300 this year, Croatia is deeply interested in seeking a success in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, many things are at stake, making NATO's mission truly important. We all know that development is not possible without security, and security is not sustainable without development. It is why we need the comprehensive approach. My question to Defense Secretary Gates in that regard would be, what seems to be the main obstacle in developing a truly efficient political-military synergy in Afghanistan?

Mr. Bütikofer, head of the Green Party in the German Parliament: I do agree with the importance of NATO's task in Afghanistan, as you have laid it out, but I do not agree that with what I would call an attempt at leadership by finger pointing or scapegoating. If we went into finger pointing, Europeans might be tempted to ask who it was that was distracted from Afghanistan in 2003. I don't think that will help us in the present situation. I also agree with a point you made that there are some who want to fight and some who don't. In fact, this nation has the fourth largest number of casualties of all nations engaged in Afghanistan. The German government has just agreed to take over the responsibility for QRF in the north. So I don't think this is helpful. In fact the discussion among NATO members I believe is a different one. That is about sorting out our strategy. You just mentioned that we need a comprehensive strategy. The effort is

not going to be one militarily. But the comprehensive strategy isn't there on the ground. If we don't correct that, we will not make our efforts a winning proposition in Afghanistan. I would like to hear more from you about correcting these strategic mistakes that we have made. Thank you.

Mrs. Gisela Stuart, British Parliament: A number of people have mentioned how difficult it is to go to war in democracies. I think we need more help to explain to our voters what success means in Afghanistan. In democracies we tend to think just having a successful election is the first step – and I think it is an important step. But I think we need clearer pathways as to when this war has been won and what the stages our, because all of us face increased restrictions on our personal liberties, as part of that war on terrorism. And again, I think our voters need to have a clearer understanding when our individual liberties are being restricted. But Secretary Gates, I would be really grateful if you just said a little bit more about Pakistan. I don't think we can win in Afghanistan without a stable Pakistan and the kind of military cooperation you foresee with them.

Mr. Bonde, German Parliament: Secretary Gates, my impression is that in these debates we always talk about our common interest, namely the successful stabilization of Afghanistan but very often we should talk more intensively about how we can do this, what helps and what does not help. In this connection, I would like to ask a question. In Germany, for us, the question of the south of Afghanistan is discussed a lot, not least because of your letter. When we consider the harsh criticism of President Karzai concerning the UK, the discussion is how can it be that the impression the Alliance always seems to portray is whose fault it is if something goes wrong. Why is it not discussed what strategies do we need and what is the right strategy for the south, where there are considerable doubts as to whether we are in fact moving in the right direction. Of course there is the question of counter-insurgency and casualties and targeted killings. I think we should have a more offensive discussion. I really think there are differentiations concerning the right strategy here.

Secretary Gates: First, a principal obstacle to improved military synergy in Afghanistan is something that I have called for almost since taking this job and that is the need for someone, a senior person from Europe, who can bring together the EU, NATO, and if necessary the United Nations, in terms of coordinating the activities that are going on in Afghanistan on the civil side. The problem that we face is an embarrassment of riches. We have many, many countries, dozens of countries helping in Afghanistan. We have scores of non-governmental organizations engaged in Afghanistan. There is no one place where information is brought together about what's working and what's not working, about where you could cross provincial lines to great effect and efficiency in particular kinds of projects. No focus on what the priorities should be. Should all of these efforts be focused for some period of time on road building or building electrical capacity. There is just no order to the process. There is no place where anybody even knows everything that is going on at one given time in Afghanistan so I think this is why this position is so important. Frankly it is disappointing that President Karzai came to see this position as being somehow threatening to him. What we are looking for is not for somebody to tell President Karzai how to run his country. We are looking for somebody

who will tell all of us what we ought to be doing, and how we ought to be coordinating our work better, to the benefit of Afghanistan. I think the absence of that coordination is the principal obstacle at this point.

The second question with respect to finger pointing and scapegoating, I think it's worth pointing out that in the comments I have made over the past few weeks, I haven't singled out a single country. This is a problem that the Alliance has, not that any individual country has. It's the Alliance that needs to face up to this. This is why I made the point in my remarks this morning that no individual country has failed to fulfill its commitment. The problem we have is the broader commitment made at Riga that the Alliance would meet the force needs of the Commander in the field. I would say that the notion of some fighting and some not fighting is self-evident to some people. Again I wasn't pointing at Germany at all. Frankly it seems a little overly sensitive since Germany was never mentioned. The fact is that we have got a number of countries there and the countries that are not willing to go into combat know who they are, and the countries that have suffered combat casualties, including Germany, know who they are. So there is no effort here to cast any aspersions on Germany whatsoever. The finger was never pointed in Germany's direction. The letter Germany got was one of 25 – all of which expressed the hope that each ally would dig deeper and see what more it could do.

Third question, what does success mean in Afghanistan? How can we help explain it to the people what success means? NATO is in the process right now of drafting a strategy paper that will look three to five years out. It will talk about what has been accomplished in Afghanistan so far. It will then lay out where we would like to see Afghanistan in three to five years, and the steps necessary to get there. So I think it will be a comprehensive strategy, including both the civil and the military sides, and also have milestones so that we'll know whether we are making progress. For a number of months, I have believed this strategy paper is a necessary complement to having a senior coordinating official as a way of lifting our sights from who is going to be where in 2008 and who is pulling out in 2009 – and to focus on the fact that this is a longer term project and we have to have a better coordinated strategy.

In terms of Pakistan, I would say that one of the things that has happened in Pakistan that is potentially very important is the apparent realization on the part of the Pakistani government in recent months that, due to the insurgency and Al Qaeda and Taliban activity, their northwest frontier is no longer just a nuisance to them but is potentially a threat to the existence of that government. The assassination of Mrs. Bhutto, Al Qaeda's threat to kill Musharraf, to kill Kiani and other senior officials of the government, and to de-stabilize Pakistan has finally focused them on the fact they may have an existential threat in the northwest part of the country. My hope is that the leadership will begin to turn their attention to that area in a way that they have not yet because it was not deemed that serious a threat. They need to develop good counter-insurgency capabilities. The Pakistani Army is proud. It is effective but it was principally trained and equipped to fight the Indians. They now face a different kind of enemy in the northwest. As I have said before, we are prepared to try and help them, particularly when it comes to training to deal with that threat.

Finally, common interests: what helps, what doesn't. The situation in the southern part of Afghanistan: what works, what doesn't work. I think that, first of all, one of the things that has been pretty clear is that the kind of counter-insurgency operations that the United States has carried on, principally in RC East has led to a significantly improved situation there. For the first time in RC East there was a lower degree of violence than there was two years ago. We also have the benefit of having several very effective provincial governors in RC East. So I think it's a combination of things. It's an effective counter-insurgency strategy. It's the appointment of quality – decisive, honest governors who have capability. It is blending the civic and economic parts of counter-insurgency along with the counter-insurgency operations. And it is moving forward as quickly as possible with the training of the Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army. At the end of the day, they are the ones who are going to be responsible for their country. The more that the local authorities have the face of Afghans, the faster the progress will be.

Horst Teltschik: Thank you Secretary Gates. Ladies and gentlemen, we have discussed Afghanistan in length; twice – yesterday and this morning. I think these were very important sessions. I apologize I have to stop here despite the fact that we have further eight interventions. Better to leave some back than not to have enough interventions. I would like to thank Secretary Bob Gates for joining us this morning. He is one of the few participants who is really staying with us all the time and having a lot of bilaterals as well. I was told by several participants that they had very good bilaterals with you. And I wish you all the best. You have one of the most difficult jobs worldwide -- settling Iraq, settling Afghanistan, and so on. I wish you luck and all the best. Thanks for coming.